THE CONJURER.

Into the world from far away,
Where the year is always tuned to May,
And the wind sounds soft as a lark aloft,
A conjurer came once on a day.
Many a mystic spell he knew
Wherewith to turn gray skies to blue,
To make dull hours grow bright as flowers,
And tasks that are old turn light as new.
A touch of his magic wand, and lo!
From empty hands sweet favors flow,
And pleasures bloom in lives of gloom
Where naught but sorrow seemed to grow.
Out of the stormy sky above
He brings white Peace, like a heavenly dove.
His might is sure, and his art is pure,
And his name—the conjurer's name—is Love.
—Julie M. Lippmann in St. Nicholas.

After Dinner Speaking.

An after dinner speech should never be wholly facetious, unless the speaker is very facetious indeed and cuts his speech short. It should not be frivolous even when the speaker is full of frivolity. It must not under any circumstances be silly, though there be people who laugh at silliness. It must not be too long winded, or highly exciting, or overheavy or ultra argumentative, or entirely statistical, or in the least rancorous. An after dinner speech should be appropriate to the occasion and delivered on time. It may contain some essential thoughts, some strokes of humor, some scraps of knowledge, some bits of fancy, some sound reasons, some good whims, some green dressing and a little fat.

Every ablebodied man of New York is apt to be an after dinner speaker some time in his life. It is possible that as many as 5,000 after dinner speeches have been made here during one winter season. One man has a record of 10 of them for a single week, three of them for one evening.

We have heard some tiptop after dinner speeches, a few. We have heard others that were wearisome, inappropriate, exasperating, enfeebling or foolish. We have heard several which were rant or drivel.

A good many men have won renown by making clever after dinner speeches —New York Sun.

Unfortunate Names.

"Well, thank heavens, I am plain Mary Ann again," declared a young woman to a sympathizing friend on one of the cross town cars yesterday. "I did so hate that name—Luella. Missus said Mary Ann wouldn't do at all. She called it 'outre' or something like that. She declared that I must be given some romantic name that would sound pretty for calling. So I have been Luella for half a year, and I'm heartily glad that I left her and am going to Mrs. North west's." The other girl gave a horrified look at mention of this name. "But, my dear," she exclaimed, "I worked for Mrs Northwest, and I know all about her. She has a daughter named Mary, and it will never do for you to be Mary too. She called me Maizie, and she'll probably call you Callie or Susanne or some other ridiculous name." Then both sighed.—Philadelphia Record.

Books Which Are Not Books.

In this catalogue of books which are no books—biblia-abiblia—I reckon court calendars, directories, pocketbooks (the literary excepted), draught boards bound and lettered on the back, scientific treatises, almanacs, statutes at large, the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns and generally all those volumes "which no gentleman's library should be without," the histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew) and Paley's "Moral Philosophy." With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.—Charles Lamb.

A Famous Gold Nugget.

On the 18th of August, 1866, a monster piece of gold was taken from the Monumental mine, near Sierra Buttes. This giant nugget weighed 1,596 troy ounces and was estimated to be worth $30,000. The mine was owned by William A. Farrish & Co. The nugget was afterward sold to R. B. Woodward of San Francisco for $21,636.62, and was placed on exhibition at the famous Woodward gardens —St. Louis Republic.

An Accommodating Street Car Line.

The street car system of Tallahassee, consisting of one car, is operated by a "nigger and a mule," both of whom live only to please the people. If the car happens to be going one way and a passenger wants to go in the opposite direction, he has only to say so, and the mule is immediately hitched to the other end and the car started in the desired direction.—New York Tribune.

Talking Away From the Subject.

When Frederick Robertson of Brighton, the great preacher who had written much about Tennyson's poems, and for whom the poet had a high regard, first called upon him, "I felt," said Tennyson, "as if he had come to pluck out the heart of my mystery, so I talked to him about nothing but beer."

Men of sense often learn from their enemies. It is from their foes—not their friends—that cities learn the lesson of building high walls and ships of war and this lesson saves their children, their homes and their properties.—Aristophanes.

The term "tabby cat" is derived from Atab, a famous street in Bagdad inhabited by the manufacturers of silken stuff called atibi or taffeta. This stuff is woven with waved markings of watered silk resembling a tabby cat's coat.

When rooms are heated by stoves economy lies in never letting the fire go down in cold weather, as it takes more heat to warm the rooms when the walls are chilled than it does to keep them so for days.

Dogs are not the only animals emotionally affected by music. Cats sometimes show great fondness for playing and singing, though music does not appear to affect them to the point of howling.

A man falls on the icy pavement and breaks his leg; he carries a quart of milk in a tin pail without a cover: he does not lose a drop of it.

A Very Forgetful Person.

"It's cur'ous how fergitful some folks are, now ain't it?" inquired Mr. Jakes, the village plumber, carpenter and sheriff in a ruminative tone. "There's people that'll fergit arrants an jobs an bills an days o' the week an so on, an I've even heard tell of folks that would fergit their own names now an agin."

"Yes, I've heard mention made of jest sech cases," said Abijah Snow, who was watching Mr. Jakes solder a good sized hole in the bottom of the Snow teakettle.

"Well, I b'lieve there's a woman in this town beats 'em all fer fergittin," said Mr. Jakes.

"Who's that?" inquired his customer, with mild interest.

"It's Mis' Willard Franklin," replied Mr. Jakes. "She's got inter the habit of comin over to our house twice a week, or sometimes oftener, as 't happens. An it's a queer thing, but if you'll b'lieve me, she sets an sets and fergits all about Willard till we've had a good square dinner, an within 10 minutes after we've cleared everythin off'n the table she'll rec'llect him an start fer home."

Mr. Jakes shot one glance at Mr. Snow, and Mr. Snow returned it as he said slowly:

"S'pose the fact of Willard's bein sech a scanty pervider an your spreadin a lib'ral table could hev anythin to do with it?"

"They say you can't ever tell what does affect folks' memory—or fergittry," said Mr. Jakes in a noncommittal tone. And then he blew out his light, and he and Mr. Snow indulged in a couple of dry chuckles as the kettle changed hands. —Youth's Companion.

Making Imitation Diamonds.

The material in which imitation diamonds are produced is called strass, from the name of its inventor, a German jeweler who flourished at the beginning of the present century. It is perfectly colorless and transparent glass, or rather crystal, of irreproachable purity, composed of rock crystal, or of white sand, mixed with oxide of lead, arsenical acid and other ingredients. Its preparation demands infinite care and a multitude of precautions, to avoid the possibility of the slightest flaw or bubble being introduced into the mass, from which are then cut the false gems in the proportions desired. Small or medium sized diamonds produce a much better effect than do large ones.

For the best forms of imitation jewelry they are cut by the same workmen that are employed in executing that function with real stones. Their task is much easier, owing to the comparative softness of strass, a quality which causes ornaments in imitation diamonds to lose very speedily their brilliancy and their deceptive aspect. To remedy this state of things imitation emeralds, rubies and sapphires are often set with a layer or slice cut from a real precious stone of inferior value and cemented with a transparent and colorless compound on the top of the false gem, so as to cover it completely.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Falcons In Japan.

In the olden times in Japan all the daimios (similar to the old English lord) had great sport with falcons, as they went out to the field to catch other birds with falcons. The falcons were tamed well and used to catch large birds, mostly cranes. When people now go out hunting with falcons, the men in charge hold the falcons upon their fingers. As soon as one sees any bird he lets the falcon rush at the bird; as soon as the falcon reaches the bird he bites at the throat and throws the bird down to the ground. Meanwhile the holder runs to the place where they are and catches both of them.

Falcons are not large birds, but as they belong to the eagle family they are strong and brave and never afraid to go at any bird to kill it, but the men in charge of falcons of course take great care in feeding and taming them.—Chicago News-Record.

The Blue of Sapphires.

Star sapphires are generally of a grayish blue tint, and the star is exhibited in its greatest perfection when looked at by the light of the sun or a candle. The sapphire is found of all tints and shades of blue, but the color which approximates to the shade formerly called "bleu du roi" is the most valuable. A really fine sapphire should appear blue by artificial light as well as by day. This stone is found in crystals generally of much larger size than the ruby. The name "sapphire" is perhaps the only one which runs through all languages with very slight alteration—the Hebrew name sapphir, the Chalda sapirinon, the Greek zaffiros, the Latin sapphirus, etc.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Their Favorite Amusement.

A favorite amusement with the United States army officers on the Rio Grande is the Mexican cock fight. Every Mexican village has its cock pit, and officers on a few hours' leave cross the river to see the fun. There are no better cockfighters in the world than the Mexicans, and as public opinion sanctions the sport the enjoymen of everybody is altogether frank. The acme of the sport is reached when the apparently vanquished bird, after having been completely buried in the dust of the arena to stanch his blood, suddenly rises as if from the grave, and with one blow from the spur slays his astonished rival in the act of crowing over his supposed victory.—San Francisco Chronicle.

The Rude Chemist.

A chemist was called up at 2 o'clock the other morning by the ringing of the night bell. On opening the door he found a damsel, who told him that she was going to a picnic that morning and was out of rouge. The prudent druggist turned her off with the assurance that he hadn't the stock to cover a cheek like hers.—Figaro.

A Standoff.

Cholly—How often does your tailor send in his bill?

Fweddie—Every week.

Cholly—Gracious! You don't get clothes that often, do you?

Fweddie—No, and neyether does the tailor get his money.—Detroit Free Press.

Alcohol as a Food.

And now a word about alcohol. Of all the substances that enter into the dietary of man that are used for stimulation, to check waste and promote repair, none is superior to alcohol. So great is its reconstructive power that strictly speaking it must be classed as a food. Whenever the powers of life are waning, be the cause whatever it may, alcohol ranks first among remedies to check it.

Like opium, it is good if properly used and baneful if abused. It is scarcely necessary to say much for or against alcohol. It is too well known to all of us to need much comment, and I shall confine myself to speaking of its use medicinally by those who never tasted it before a physician prescribed it for some disease.

Alcohol is unquestionably par excellence a food adjunct in the severe forms of fever where nutriment is urgently required to keep up life, but where the digestive organs have lost their assimilative function.

Here, as long as the actual waste is compensated for, alcohol does good. Beyond that it is worse than useless. Unfortunately such restricted dosage does not satisfy the careless doctor of easy conscience. He gives it by the oft repeated tablespoonfuls without stopping to discover that the result wished for has been attained in the slower, fuller pulse and stronger heart.

Hundreds and hundreds of men and women in all walks of society contracted their tippling habit by regarding as unrestricted the advice of their physicians that wine or stimulants of some kind are necessary for them to take. The advice in itself is justifiable, but the lack of restriction is culpable. And so these poor, deluded convalescents go on taking stimulants, which they find not only agreeable, but desirable, until they become slaves to drink.—New York Herald.

An Apparent Paradox.

"I had always been taught that cold contracts and heat expands," said Harold Burwell, "but I have had an experience that is different. In my office I use incandescent lights, and on my desk I have an upright bulb, with a standard. The shade was broken on it, and I placed it on top of the desk in a corner between the wall and a cabinet of pigeonholes. The other morning on entering the office I hung my derby hat on this bulb. Later on I went into an adjoining room, which was dark, and needing some light pushed the button in the wall that set the electric lamps aflame. The lights gave the place such a cheerful aspect, it being a stormy day outside, that I did not turn them off. At noon, when I was going out to lunch, I reached for my hat, and it was baked.

"The incandescent lamp, which had been aglow all the while, had made it very hot, and the leather band was so drawn and contracted that I couldn't get my hat on my head. It simply sat on the top of my cranium like those tiny hats that variety comedians sometimes wear. I held it on as best I could and went out. The wind caught and carried it long enough to give it a thorough cooling. It was long before the band relaxed and the hat was all right again, so far as fitting my head was concerned. If that wasn't a first class case of heat contracting and cold expanding, I'd like to know what contraction and expansion are."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Dull Boys and Mechanical Ability.

Great has always been the comfort that the parents of boys dull at their books have had in thinking that they would probably be particularly bright in some other direction. If there was any doubt about it, the fact could always be proved by stories of artists, writers and musicians, who have been thought dullards at school. But mechanical genius and dullness at books do not, it is said, go hand in hand. The director of a large western school of manual training says of such cases: "As a rule, such a boy fails to show marked ability of any sort. A boy who comes to us with a passion for machinery, who cannot be kept away from engines, the rattle of cogs and the snapping of belts, never gets beyond a sort of morbid, simple curiosity to 'see the wheels go round.' He develops no curiosity nor the ability to do good, accurate work. His book work is of a very similar character."—New York Post.

Planet Shadows.

There is no doubt that some of the most brilliant planets, such as Venus and Jupiter, are capable of casting distinct shadows, as may be seen any fine evening in the tropics. Not long ago M. L. Guiot observed that Jupiter threw a distinct shadow of his watch upon a wall, and that he was able to read a newspaper by the light. M. Moye also finds that Mars is able to cast a shadow, but a much fainter one than Jupiter. He was also able to count the number of words in a newspaper placed in the light of the planet entering by a window, but he could not read them.—Exchange.

Two Recent Inventions.

The varied trend of men's minds is well illustrated by the recent invention of two policeman's billies, one of which contains knife blades that shoot out from the interior if the prisoner grasps the instrument, while the other is fitted with a rubber cap to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain. President Angell of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals prefers the latter.—Boston Transcript.

The Music Lesson.

"Your little daughter, as she went out awhile ago, seemed the very picture of misery."

"She was going to take a music lesson."

"And your oldest daughter, who is now going out, looks even more miserable."

"She is going to give a music lesson." —New York Press.

A Dangerous Narrative.

Jones—Schmidt, the barber, told me a wonderful story this morning.

Brown—Illustrated with cuts, I suppose?—Truth.